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is the interest of a sister in the house established by her cattle that she may on occasion even exercise some control in her brother's choice of a wife. Dwagu wanted to marry Mabula, who was already married. His sister's husband then said, 'We shall not allow you to use my cattle to marry that woman. She will bring nothing but trouble.' If the wife obtained by means of the sister's cattle is badly treated by her husband, she may run to his sister, who will intervene on her behalf, or even in extreme cases arrange for her to live permanently away from her husband, who could then never claim a return of the bride-price from his wife's parents. Muhale, whom we knew well, had, under the influence of his second wife, chased away his chief wife, who ran to his sister. She advised the wife to make some pardon beer and take it as a peace-offering, but when he refused this his sister arranged for the woman to live with a widow in the village next door to her. Now, when Muhale's second wife quarrels and refuses to cook for him, he takes refuge with the wife he chased away till the storm is over!

The influence of a sister is reinforced by her religious position. At the annual harvest offering to the gods, it is always the eldest sister in the family who has to officiate. She is the one best able to intercede with the spirits. Any displeasure or secret grievance against her brother on her part may have the effect of stirring up the spirits to cause illness in his household, especially among his children (certain other relatives also have this power, but one hears most often of the sister). Hence it is said, 'The sister should roast pips; if she roasts the village [is angry] it will go up in flames' (*khadi e hadiga dithaga; ya hadiga mutse u ya swa*). Sometimes a sister may threaten her brother, saying, 'If I complain, nothing will be good in your village.' On the death of the father, it is the eldest sister who, together with the father's brother, divides out the inheritance, and, at the only installation of a district head that we were able to witness, the emblems of office were handed over to the young heir's sister for him, though he was already in his twenties. In view of all these facts, a man's sister has great influence over him and may be called to remonstrate with him, more especially in matters affecting his own household when even his parents have been unsuccessful. But she has no right to interfere without just cause and, if she were to make needless trouble, her brother would very soon ask her to leave his village in peace.

Not all sisters play the role that has been ascribed in general terms to a man's sister. Though every sister is potentially priestess and guardian of her brother's household, in practice all these offices are seldom combined in one person. In religious ceremonies affecting the family as a whole, the eldest daughter of the chief wife would officiate; in case of illness, a man's uterine sister might be asked to officiate. If the sister whose cattle has been used is younger than her brother, she may have little influence as compared with her elder sister; furthermore, where the sister is a woman of no personality, her influence may be negligible. It is a man's uterine sisters that play the biggest part in his life, for in this, as in everything, the individual family is always asserting itself as against the larger, polygynous family group. A classificatory sister, one by the mother's sister or father's brother, or one by a wife of the father other

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than the chief wife, plays little part in a man's life; she is merely a female relative to whom a certain amount of respect and attachment is due. Often a woman's son marries daughters of several of her brothers. It is, however, only to the daughter of that brother who used her cattle that she has a right—has, as the Lovedu put it, an 'entrance' to his village.

In view of the position of sisters and brothers later in life, one would not expect great familiarity or freedom between them during their childhood. Brother and sister may talk freely to each other, but if they rollick together their parents will stop them. Hence the riddle, 'What is it that is at hand and yet beyond reach?' (*Kha ntsita khi e ma?*) The answer, 'The breast of my sister,' refers to the playful catching hold of the breasts of girls by young boys, which is taboo in case of a sister. In strong contrast to the free, yet proper, relationship between brother and sister stands the joking relationship between cross-cousins. Derived from the brother-sister relationship is that of the father's sister, who is accorded honour and respect by the children of the house she has established. The term *khadi* is used loosely to denote either father's sister or eldest sister, for it is the eldest sister who will take over the religious functions of the father's sister after her death.

A well-marked characteristic of Lovedu society, one that clearly distinguishes it from the strictly patrilineal Zulu, Xhosa, and Pondo, is the importance of the mother's side of the family. Nothing of interest or importance takes place without their presence; even at the annual harvest beer offerings given to the gods on the father's side, relatives on the mother's side, who are not concerned in the religious aspect of the ceremony, will be present for the beer and social amenities. Important in maintaining close links between a man and his mother's relatives are the bonds of interdependence between the families of a brother, and the sister whose cattle he used. The sister's son is a potential son-in-law, who will be accorded great honour in the household of his mother's brother. A man's mother may also be the *khadi* who has to go and make offerings in the mother's brother's household, and in her absence her son might officiate for her. Later, when a man is engaged to his mother's brother's daughter, there will be gifts of beer from the girl's family. They are thus bound together by a variety of links.

But the greatest of all bonds between a man and his mother's side of the family is conceived by the Lovedu to be one of love. There is a saying, usually quoted by women, '*Wa mma u sme; wa rare gi mabakataka,*' which, freely translated, means, 'Love lies on the mother's side of the family; ownership on the father's'. One's relationship with the mother's side of the family is modelled on that towards a mother and is much influenced by the petting and spoiling received at the hands of the maternal grandmother, with whom most children spend a few years of their life, generally soon after the birth of a younger brother or sister. Every child recalls with delight the good time he had when at his mother's brother's village with his mother's mother; how she treated him to tit-bits, how she scolded or beat only her son's children if her grandchildren quarrelled and fought. For, it is said, a woman loves her daughter's children (who only come on visits) far more than those of her

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602 son (whom she has always with her). The mother's side of the family,
no doubt because of this love, are thought to be peculiarly suited to the
[736] rearing of a child whose mother has died. Such a child is, in Lovedu
society, never left in the hands of a fellow wife of its mother, but goes to
its mother's mother, if she is alive, or its mother's brother or even a
mother's sister—any one, in fact, an the mother's side who is kind-hearted
enough to wish to rear an orphan.

604 In constrast to Shangana-Tonga, there is in Lovedu society no joking
relationship between a man and his mother's brother. Your mother's
brother may be kind to you, but you have to show him respect: if he
asks you to go on a message or to help him in the fields you cannot
refuse; while, if he needs you, you may be sent to herd for him or help
nurse his small children. Moreover, he may one day be your father-in-
●605 law and his wife your mother-in-law. The people whom one is privileged
to tease to one's heart's content, and with whom one may exchange ribald
jokes, are one's cross-cousins, the children of one's mother's brother and
father's sister or their children, cross-cousins once-removed, a generation
below. When very young, a child may be conditioned to this type of
easy relationship by being given a stick and told, 'Go and beat your
cross-cousin. Show him your cousinhood,' whereupon he is expected
playfully to beat his cousin. If the cousin cries, they will pacify him,
saying, 'Gracious! How can you cry? Don't you know it's your cousin?
You too can beat him some other time.' Or they will give him a stick and
say, 'Go and avenge yourself.' Whenever one finds people behaving
uproariously in each other's company or calling out vulgar jokes, one
can be quite sure they are cross-cousins. Cross-cousins marry each
[582] other; but while cases of a man marrying his father's sister's daughter
sometimes occur, specially in the royal family, they are regarded as not
quite regular and mother's brother's daughter marriage is by far the most
usual. When a man tries to make love to his father's sister's daughter,
she may tease him, saying, 'Away with you. We marry you, not you us.
We are the husbands who find wives in your family.' The joking relation-
[584] ship between a man and his cousin gives place, immediately marriage
negotiations are begun, to one of strict avoidance between prospective
bride and groom and a certain amount of respect even between the boys
in the two families. Men say they can often tell by the attitude of their
cross-cousin that there is an understanding between him and their sister
even before negotiations have begun.

602 Relatives-in-law are quite as important as relatives by blood. Where
marriage with the mother's brother's daughter has taken place, the
marriage strengthens an existing blood link, giving far greater meaning
and intimacy to the bond. The importance of relatives-in-law lies in the
fact that there is conceived to be a lasting bond between the two families
for generations to come, since where a man has married there his son will
find a wife. The bond is kept alive by various social usages, not least
among which is the beer that is always passing (about once a year, unless
the harvest is bad) from the village of the wife's family to that of their
son-in-law. Moreover, a man's relatives-in-law become to his children
the mother's side of the family, which plays so important a part